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Ethnic Identity Reinforces Attachment to Canada

Attachment to Canada and Ethnic Identity

One of the most comprehensive surveys on attitudes towards multiculturalism in Canada was conducted by the Angus Reid Group in 1991 (1). About 3,325 Canadians were interviewed and asked a wide range of questions about their ethnic identity and pride in being Canadian. *"The statement: 'you can be proud of being Canadian and proud of your ancestry at the same time' received a virtually unanimous believability rating"* (1:5). Approximately 95% of Canadians agreed with this statement. Regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, the vast majority (78%) believed that Canadians share many values in common and 91% felt that these values are important in binding people together as a nation. Also, almost three-quarters of Canadians (73%) believed that the multiculturalism policy ensured that people from different backgrounds had a sense of belonging to Canada. It should also be noted that 89% of those interviewed identified themselves as Canadians and only 6% used any other form of identification.

Two economic studies of the effects of Canada's multiculturalism policy were carried out by the Economic Council of Canada in the early 1990s (2). These studies concluded that integration (as a central goal of the multiculturalism policy) leads to greater participation of immigrants in the host society while maintaining their cultural identity. Assimilation, on the other hand, puts pressure on them to give up their cultural identity as the price for acceptance by the host society. The reports also suggest that Canada's multiculturalism policy *"strengthens the belief that a person's confidence in his/her own individual identity and place in the Canadian mosaic facilitates his/her acceptance of the rights of members of other groups"* (2:32).

After carrying out studies on ethnic groups and reviewing a large number of both Canadian and international studies, John Berry and Rudy Kalin, social-psychologists based at Queen's University, concluded that ethnic identity offers greater self-confidence and pride to immigrant and minority groups (3). This self-confidence, in turn, leads to greater tolerance and an increase in the identification with the larger national identity. Hyphenation, thus, does not entail any disattachment to Canada. It is regarded as a fundamental benefit of our multiculturalism policy: *"the potential for promoting the social and psychological well-being of all Canadians"* (3:55).

Multiculturalism and Ethnic Identity

From another angle, Professor Will Kymlicka of the University of Ottawa explored the linkages between ethnic identity and Canadian citizenship (4). He compared Canada to Australia and the USA by looking at four empirical indicators: naturalization rates, political participation rates, official language competency and intermarriage rates. He argues that one of the key explanations of the Canadian success is its multiculturalism policy. *"Multiculturalism is intended to make it possible for people to retain or express their identity with pride, if they so choose, by reducing the legal, institutional, economic or societal obstacles to this expression"* (4:8). It does not penalize or disapprove of people who choose not to identify with their ethnic group, or describe them as poor citizens or lesser Canadians.

Professor Leslie Laczko sees another positive consequence of multiculturalism in the emergence of transnational identities which may be extremely helpful in establishing communication and trade links with other parts of the world (5). In the context of the globalization process, *"Canada can in fact be considered the most extreme outlier in the overall relationship between level of national development and degree of internal pluralism"* (5:23).



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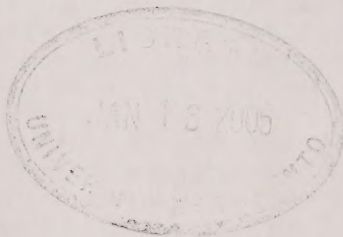
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A recent study of ethnic identification and national attachment was conducted by the Policy Studies Institute in England and its findings were summarized by Modood (6). Over 5,000 individuals of ethnic origins as diverse as Caribbean, African Blacks, South Asians and Chinese were extensively interviewed. The major finding of this study is that, "*the majority of respondents had no difficulty with the idea of hyphenated or multiple identities, which accords with our prior study and other study and research*" (6:9). Ethnic identities did not necessarily compete with a sense of Britishness. More than half of the Chinese and more than two-thirds of the other groups said that they felt British, and these proportions were higher among young people and those who had been born in Britain.

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Visible Minority Workers Are at Greater Economic Risk

Disadvantaged Communities

In 1997, Professor James L. Torczyner of McGill University conducted a study of the major problems affecting the Black communities of Canada (1). After analysing both community and census data, he concluded that *"Black families in Canada may be experiencing considerable stress and change — both financial and emotional"* (1:2). Despite the fact that Black workers had almost comparable levels of educational attainment as non-Blacks (one in five Black adults was either attending university or at least had completed a Bachelor's degree), the Black workforce tended to have higher percentages of unemployed workers than the Canadian population as a whole: 15% to 10%. Black workers earned less money than Canadian workers as a whole (their average income was 15% less than those of the average Canadian worker: \$20,617 to \$24,001). Black women earned an equivalent of 71% of the average earnings of Black men. *"Almost 160,000 Black persons lived in poverty in 1991. More than three out of ten Blacks in Canada lived below the poverty line in 1991"* (1:11). Only 16% of Canadians did so in the same year. Women and children were, economically, the most vulnerable population segments.

Earning Gaps and Life-Cycle Losses

Several studies of ethnic and racial discrimination in labour markets have been conducted in Canada. One common finding of these econometric studies is that a significant proportion of the existing wage gap between white and non-white workers is not directly attributable to demographic, educational or occupational characteristics of workers. It may be the product of racial discrimination practised by employers in the hiring and promotion of their workers.

After conducting an econometric analysis of 1991 census data, economist Robert Swidinsky of the University of Guelph (2) concluded that *"individual minority groups have to contend with significant wage and occupational discrimination in their labour market activities"* (2:38). Black immigrants encountered the most serious labour market disadvantages. A similar study carried out by Pendakur and Pendakur found, after partialling out human capital related factors, that *"among men, the earnings penalties faced by Aboriginals and visible minorities are large and present in both native-born and immigrant populations"* (3:18). Visible minority males born in Canada were earning, on the average, 9% less income than similarly qualified white males. Among male immigrants, the income penalty was in the range of 15%. Although few differences in incomes were observed between visible and non-visible minority Canadian-born women, visible minority immigrant women faced a 7% wage penalty compared to their non-visible minority counterparts. Previously, in an econometric analysis, Da Silva and Dougherty had found that *"about a third of the offered earnings differential is attributable to discrimination"* (4:15).

Visible minority workers experience substantial income losses over their life-cycle earnings compared to non-visible minority workers. Using census data, economist Ather Akbari of Saint Mary's University found that *"the life cycle earnings of such a worker are 13% lower than those of a worker of European ethnicity. If such workers had not faced any discrimination in earnings, better productivity (education, number of weeks worked during the year, etc.) would have resulted in a 2% advantage"* (5:1). Discrimination, however, offset this advantage by causing an earnings decline of 15%. A year of work experience acquired by a non-European origin worker was valued significantly lower in Canadian labour markets than that acquired by a comparable European origin worker.



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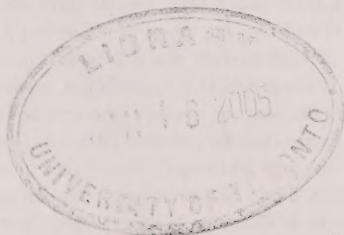
Wage gaps between visible and non-visible minority workers have also been studied in light of the educational credentials held by Canadian and foreign-born workers. A report produced by Wright and McDade, on behalf of the Institute for Research in Public Policy (IRPP), concluded that "*employers may be taking advantage of an opportunity to, for example, pay lower wages and salaries under the pretense of the non-recognition of credentials*" (6:77). Both discrimination and the non-recognition of credentials may be occurring at the same time. Differences in the rates of income return were more pronounced for men born in developing countries, particularly for those of visible minority backgrounds.

Racism in Hiring

Important field studies in the area of racism and hiring practices in Metropolitan Toronto were carried out by anthropologist Frances Henry and colleagues (7,8,9). In 1984, in-person and phone applications to 191 jobs were made by equally qualified applicants differing only in their ethnic and racial backgrounds. Henry and Ginzberg summarize the main finding of this study by saying that "*the results of the study clearly indicate that there is very substantial racial discrimination affecting the ability of members of racial minority groups to find employment*" (7:52). Whites had "3 job prospects for every one of Blacks" (7:51). Black applicants were also subject to more discourteous and negative treatment during the course of the job application. South Asians had to make at least 20 calls to pass the screening out procedures. The 1989 study found small differences between person-job offers for Whites and Blacks but the latter were generally treated differently. In at least 23% of the job contacts, Black applicants were treated rudely. "*In cases where applicants did not receive job offers, Black applicants were treated rudely four times more often than White applicants*" (9:18). Indo-Pakistanis and Blacks had to make, on average, approximately 19 to 20 calls to get a favourable job prospect.

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Multiculturalism Promotes Integration and Citizenship

The questions of whether or not multiculturalism has led to the “ghettoization” of ethnic groups and if they integrate socially and politically was examined by Professor Will Kymlicka, an expert in ethnic relations and citizenship issues, based at the University of Ottawa (1). He compared both domestic and international data covering 1971 to the present. After examining four empirical indicators of citizenship and integration, he points to the following facts:

Rising Naturalization Rates

Naturalization rates have continued to increase since 1971 (the year of the adoption of the multiculturalism policy). In 1995, the number of citizenship certificates granted was a record high of 227,000. This trend is particularly significant given that the economic incentives to naturalize have lessened over the last several years (i.e. landed immigrants and citizens have similar labour market access, social benefits rights, etc.). Immigrants from non-traditional source countries (so called “multicultural” groups) have the highest rates of naturalization in the country.

Active Political Participation of Minorities

There is no evidence of declining political participation by ethnic groups. Several members of the Canadian parliament come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. Ethnic groups do not form individual political parties and tend to vote for traditional national parties which uphold Canada’s basic liberal democratic principles.

Official Language Competences

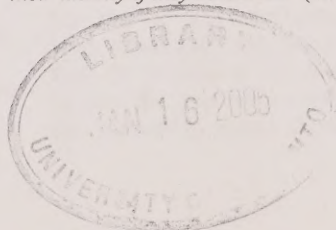
Demand for English and French as a Second Language classes has never been higher and demand exceeds supply in some cities. Recent statistics show that 97% of Canadians speak one of the official languages. Immigrants desire to learn an official language despite the fact that many do not qualify for classes due to their recent arrival to Canada.

Rising Exogamy

Intermarriage rates have consistently increased since 1971. Endogamy has declined for both immigrants and native-born children. Ethnic friendships and mixed marriages are more approved of than before. In 1968, 52% of Canadians approved of ethnic marriages. About 81% approved of these types of marriages in 1995.

Cross National Comparisons

After comparing Canada to the USA and Australia, Kymlicka found that Canada fared much better than either country in all dimensions examined. The author concludes his analysis by stating that there is no real evidence that multiculturalism policy creates any “ghettoization” of ethnic groups. In fact, the opposite is likely to be true: historically, multiculturalism has been a vital policy promoting citizenship acquisition, participation and integration, while allowing people to “retain or express their identity if they so choose” (1:9).



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Hate and Bias Activity in Canada

Hate and bias activity are part of a spectrum of intolerance that can range from harassment and hate speech to physical violence and murder. Hate crime and bias motivated activity are acts directed against persons who are members of a group identified by race, religion, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender or disability. Expressions of hate should have no place in Canadian society. Our commitment to diversity and human rights demands that all Canadians have a right to dignity and respectful treatment regardless of ethnic, racial, religious or other differences.

Challenges to Collecting Hate Crime Statistics

Despite efforts to collect data, it has been difficult to ascertain the magnitude of hate and bias activity in Canada because these crimes are often not reported and, in the past, those that were reported were not classified or coded in a consistent manner. Researchers in this area such as Julian Roberts (1) and Bill Jeffery (2) explain that one of the most significant challenges for research and data collection of hate crimes is that there is no consistent or national definition of hate crime. For example, some police forces and community groups define a hate crime as an offense *partially* motivated by hate or bias, whereas others argue the crime must be *entirely* motivated by hate or bias. Another major variation in the definition of hate crime is whether or not a list of identifiable target groups is included and what groups are included in that list.

Taking these challenges into consideration, Professor Julian Roberts estimated that there are approximately **60,000** annually hate crimes committed in Canada's nine major urban centres. This estimation was based on information compiled from police departments, B'nai Brith and Gay and Lesbian Community

Groups. Based on these sources, Roberts also reported that 61% of hate crimes are directed against racial minorities (particularly Blacks), 23% against religious minorities (particularly Jews), 11% against groups of different sexual orientation, and 5% against ethnic minorities.

Currently, there are several new initiatives that will shed some light on the level of hate crime in Canada. Every year Statistics Canada runs a special survey on different themes called the General Social Survey. The 1999 General Social Survey on *Victimization* will include questions on hate crime and the 2000 General Social Survey on *Citizen Access To And Use Of Information Communication Technology* will include questions on hate and the Internet. Furthermore, the Centre for Justice Statistics, which is part of Statistics Canada, is in the preliminary stages of a research project on the national collection of hate crime statistics.

Hate Crimes on the Rise?

Although there are no national statistics on the number of hate crimes in Canada, there are a number of police organizations and community organizations that have been collecting data in this area for some time. In 1998, hate and bias crime units in Toronto and B.C. (there is a province wide unit) reported an increase in the number of hate crimes. It is not clear if this is a result of increase in incidents or an increase in reporting as a result of police outreach programs to targeted communities. Toronto's Hate Crime Unit (3 & 4) reported a 22% rise of hate crimes in Metropolitan Toronto between 1997 and 1998, up to 228 from 187. The most victimized groups were Blacks, Jews, South Asians and Gays. In B.C., police reported an increase from 131 incidents to 167, an increase of 25% (5). Unlike Toronto, B.C. reported that the most victimized group was Gay men followed by people of colour and religious groups.



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As mentioned above, there are several community organizations, particularly those associated with targeted communities, that collect research, data and anecdotal evidence on hate crimes. B'nai Brith Canada has been producing an annual audit of anti-Semitic incidents for several years. In 1998, there were 240 anti-Semitic incidents reported to the Canadian B'nai Brith League of Human Rights, a 14% increase from 1997 (6:5). About 82% of them were harassment incidents, including threats, slurs, and the distribution of hate propaganda. Incidents of antisemitic vandalism decreased 28% from 1997. In the last 10 years of monitoring there have been a total of 2,278 incidents reported or an average of 228 per year. It should be noted that 51% of all cases were reported in Toronto, 14% in Ottawa and 8% in Montreal.

Who Commits Hate Crimes?

There is a common public perception that hate crimes are rare incidents perpetuated by members of society's radical fringe. However, this is not necessarily the case. In fact, the Toronto police reported that most hate crimes are often "unprovoked, random assaults committed in public areas throughout the city by unknown suspects" (3:4). While some of these suspects, approximately 10% according to Toronto statistics, are associated with organized hate groups, the majority of suspects are young males acting alone or in small groups.

Jeffrey A. Ross, a Senior Research Associate at the Centre for Communitarian Policy Studies at George Washington University, examined a number of hate related incidents in Canada which had been reported in the media between 1960 and 1990 (7). These comprised 159 events where persons instigated and carried out violence against a group or a particular individual. Most attacks were carried out randomly and only a few specific individuals were targeted. Typically, the attack was committed by individuals unaffiliated or not claiming membership with a particular group, or by groups not wishing to be publicly identified with their actions. The provinces of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia accounted for 97% of these types of incidents.

Hate on the Internet

A relatively inexpensive and convenient medium, the Internet has become an attractive channel for hate organizations because of its ability to transcend geographical boundaries, its speed and easy accessibility and the great deal of anonymity enjoyed by its users. In 1999, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre counted at least 1400 international hate sites (8) that ranged from simple electronic bulletin boards to more sophisticated interactive websites. *Nizkor* (www.nizkor.org), a Hebrew word that means "we will remember," is a website dedicated to countering Holocaust denial, racism and anti-Semitism, and it estimated that, in 1997, "about 150 individuals spend their time posting hate propaganda in the Internet" (9:3).

In the international comparison, "Combatting Hate on the Internet: An International Comparative Review of Policy Approaches," Heather De Santis (10) reported that the use of the Internet for hate messages has raised a major question of national and international jurisdictions. Many countries (e.g. Australia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and the USA) are exploring ways to control the dissemination of illegal/controversial content on the Internet while addressing issues of freedom of expression, access to information and applicable legislation.

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